

CRITIQUE OF INTELLIGENCE "SHORTCOMINGS"

TALKING PAPER

FOR OPENING THE DISCUSSION

As we discussed at our last meeting, the principal focus of our discussion today is to be on a CRITIQUE OF INTELLIGENCE during which we would identify shortcomings which could provide the basis for development of an action program for the Working Group.

We probably will not get into a discussion of the working program today, but at a minimum I would hope that out of our exchange of views can be formulated a set of statements --perhaps 10 to 15 in number -- which represent our consensus as to intelligence deficiencies calling for follow-on action, whether by this Group or by various elements of the Intelligence Community.

What I am hoping for is a frank and candid discussion in which each of you will participate actively so that we can have the benefit both of your own views and of your interpretation of the views of the senior level officials of the organizations which you represent.

The whole point of our exercise is to identify ways of making the intelligence product of greater use to those for whom it is produced.

What we are after, if you will, is a post mortem list on what is wrong the the intelligence now being provided to those who could put it to use.

Since this Working Group is essentially a representative of intelligence consumers --other than myself -- I ~~am looking to~~ ^{trust} that you will feel free to be completely forthcoming in your comments.

Mr. _____, would you like to open the discussion.

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE SEVERAL DIFFERENT APPROACHES WHICH MIGHT BE USED BY THE CHAIRMAN IF THE DISCUSSION FALTERS. THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE APPROACHES IS NOT INTENDED TO SUGGEST ANY RELATIVE PRIORITY.

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GEN WILSON
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JOK

APPROACH ONE

Some intelligence officers believe that the most vocal critics of intelligence neither read nor are briefed on the available intelligence.

Do you consider this a fair statement?

I recognize that what gets to a senior official is usually determined by an administrative assistant or an executive officer who screens all incoming material, including intelligence.

Whether this screener knows anything about intelligence -- or is aware of what his boss is interested in seeing -- undoubtedly varies from office to office.

Do any of you know, for instance, what ~~Dr. Kissinger~~ intelligence products Dr. Kissinger actually reads?

Or Dr. Schlessinger? Or Mr. Clements? Or Mr. Ingerson? Or Secretary Simon? or senior members of the JCS staff?

Could we find out -- and if we did what value do you think this might have to our consideration of a Work Program ?

The key problem here is our examining what could be done better to assure that key intelligence materials actually reach the officials to whom they are addressed.

~~Benjamin~~ Can you identify any aspect of this on which we should be working?

APPROACH TWO

Perhaps it would be useful at this stage to look at the problem of improving intelligence by approaching it from the standpoint of the characteristics which are desired in a good intelligence product.

Essentially these characteristics are:

- Its pertinence to the policy being formulated or decision being made
- The quality of analysis
- The manner of presentation
- Timeliness or currency

Let's look at each of these in turn.

How or by what actions could ~~the response~~ we enhance the likelihood that the intelligence product will be pertinent to the concerns of its high level users?

What could or should be done to improve the quality of analysis?

How would you like to see the presentation of intelligence improved?

Do you see ways in which timeliness of the intelligence response could be improved?

APPROACH THREE

Dr. Kissinger is quote as having been very critical of a particular National Intelligence Estimate, but when he was asked what kind of an estimate he really wanted his response allegedly was: "Don't ask me that, since I don't know. But I will recognize it when I see it."

Similarly, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is reported to have said that his intelligence support was excellent and would be outstanding if only he could articulate what he wanted.

These comments are part and parcel of the problem of communication between the intelligence producers and the intelligence users.

This ~~was~~ matter of having intelligence consumers do better at conveying to intelligence users what it is they want and need may well be the basic root of the problem we are considering.

What could the Working Group ~~do~~ do that would better enable intelligence consumers to articulate their needs?

I solicit any ideas you have.

NSC staff members are quoted as being critical of intelligence on the basis that the analysis tends to be "naive" and that "not enough attention is paid to identification of alternatives or options."

Mr. Ober, could you comment on this?

Secretary Clements is quoted as being very critical of the intelligence he received, saying that "it answers the wrong questions." ~~On occasion~~ Only very recently he advised intelligence representatives that his own sources were much better than the information he obtained from intelligence

Mr. Ellsworth, would you care to comment on what might be done to better satisfy Mr. Clements' expectations?

Planning weapons systems is a difficult process, and bringing new systems into being is very time-consuming. Weapons systems planners are less concerned with current capabilities of potential adversaries than with what their capabilities will be 15-20 years in the future. I do understand that DDR&E and the Joint Staff has been critical because intelligence does not project far enough into the future?

Admiral Hilton, could you comment on this?

The recent expansion in the US requirement for foreign economic information has caused the Intelligence Community to devote much more attention to this kind of intelligence. As a result, I understand that concern has been expressed in departments such as Treasury, Commerce and Air culture as to whether the Intelligence community isn't encroaching on their domain. This might turn out to be a problem with which the Working Group should concern itself, along with the Economic Intelligence Subcommittee of the NSCIC.

Mr. Morell, could you give us the Treasury view on this?

State does not consider as (quote) intelligence (unquote) much of its reporting which officials in other departments, and particularly intelligence officers, consider to be intelligence information.

As some of you are aware, Mr. Colby is seeking to make greater use of Foreign Service reporting in the production of intelligence, but concern is expressed in some quarters --including Mr. Clements --that State's "back channel" information which could be extremely useful is not being made available to those to whom it would be of value.

Mr. Brown, could you comment on this, particularly as it may relate to the problem we have under discussion today --the shortcomings in intelligence production.

APPROACH FIVE

Each of you, or representatives of your staffs and offices, participate in a number of NSC-related special purpose groups.

What specific criticisms are you aware of with respect to the kind and quality of the intelligence support which these organizations receive?

Mr. Morell: Could you give us the Treasury view as to the intelligence support provided to the Council for International Economic Policy (CIEP) or to the CIEP Operations Group?

Admiral Hilton: Could you comment with respect to the intelligence support received by the Verification Panel Work Group or the Interagency MBFR Coordination Committee?

Mr. Ellsworth: Would you care to comment in regard to the WSAG Contingency Planning Working Group or the DoD NATO Task Force, or the Military Advisory Group for Mid-East Peace Negotiations?

Mr. Brown: Could you comment on intelligence support for the Technical Working Group of the Under Secretarys' Committee or the General Advisory Committee on Arms Control and Disarmament?

Mr. Ober: Would you give us an idea as to the kind of criticisms you have heard recently from NSC staff members, say from Col. Kennedy, the Assistant to the President for NSC Planning, or Dennis Clift, who handles European and Soviet matters, or Dave Elliott in the science and technology fields?

APPROACH SIX

In general, do any of you see a real difference in the flow of information during crisis and non-crisis periods?

What I am getting at is that I have been told that during crisis periods your staffs are flooded with raw intelligence data when what you really want is more analysis and interpretation.

If this is true, could any of you cite some examples?

More importantly, do any of you have some ideas as to what the Intelligence Community ought to be focusing attention on in order to provide better support in crisis periods?

This kind of critique is on-going proposition -